

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled).

CLAIM 14(ORIGINAL). A coupler having a female-end for connection to a male-end of an element, comprising:

a main frame having at least one cutout formed therein;

a collet means mounted for slidable movement at least partially about said main frame;

a compressible female-end member for engaging a threaded male-end of a hose or faucet and the like;

said compressible female-end member comprising projecting means projecting into said at least one cutout of said main frame;

sealing means in said main frame for providing an initial seal for a male-end of an element inserted in said compressible female-end member;

said slidable collet means comprising locking means for locking said collet means in place in a first position when said compressible female-end member locks a male-end therein, said first position closing off said at least one cutout to prevent expansion of said compressible female-end member, and, when said locking means is released, allowing said slidable collet means to a second position exposing said at least one cutout to allow expansion of said compressible female-end member to thereby disengage with a male-end;

said sealing means comprising a washer in contact with a male-end of a hose or faucet inserted in said compressible female-end member, a piston member, and biasing means for biasing said piston member toward said compressible female-end member frame for providing

said initial seal, said piston member having a surface greater than the surface area of said washer.

CLAIM 15(ORIGINAL). The coupler according to claim 14, wherein said collet comprises a thicker section facing toward said compressible female-end member, and a thinner section defining first cooperating means; said main body portion comprising second cooperating means for engaging with said first cooperating means for maintain said collet in said first position, and when disengaged allowing said collet to be slid to said second position; said thinner section comprising an annular end-surface defining said first cooperating means; said second cooperating means comprises at least one detent means projecting outwardly from said main body portion; said locking means comprising push-means projecting outwardly from said thinner section of said collet means, whereby when said push-means is squeezed , said thinner section is distorted to allow clearance of said annular end-surface past said second cooperating means.

CLAIM 16(ORIGINAL). The coupler according to claim 15, wherein said locking means comprises two said push-means spaced 180 degrees apart, and said second cooperating means comprises two said detent means spaced 180 degrees apart, said spacing of said two push-means being 90 degrees out of phase with said spacing of said two detent means.

CLAIM 17(ORIGINAL). A coupler having a female-end for connection to a male-end of an element, comprising:

a main body portion having a first end and second end;

outer retaining means mounted for slidable relative to said main body portion;

sealing means operatively associated with said second end of said main body portion for providing a seal for a male-end of an element;

a flexible female-portion for receiving and locking a male-end therein, said female-portion being operative associated with said sealing means at said second end;

means mounting said flexible, resilient female-portion for movement toward and away from said sealing means comprising wedge means operatively associated with said outer retaining means for urging said female-portion toward said sealing means when said outer retaining means is moved in a first direction.

CLAIM 18(ORIGINAL). The coupler according to claim 17, wherein said main body portion comprises an outer annular surface about which said outer retaining means at least partially telescopes; said outer annular surface comprising first cooperating means;

said outer retaining means comprising interiorly-facing second cooperating means for engaging with said first cooperating means;

said outer retaining means further comprising push-means arcuately spaced from said second cooperating means;

said outer retaining means being an substantially tubular and deformable, whereby, when said push-means is depressed, said second cooperating means is brought out of engagement with said first cooperating means for allowing movement of said outer retaining means relative to said main body portion.

CLAIM 19(ORIGINAL). The coupler according to claim 17, wherein said female portion comprises a split ring having interior male-thread engaging means, said split ring having first

camming-surface means; said means for mounting said flexible, resilient female-portion for movement toward and away from said sealing means further comprising radially-compressible spacer means operatively associated with said split ring and having second camming-surface means for engagement with said first camming surface means; first camming-surface means being spaced from said second camming-surface means before said split ring is moved theretoward when initially receiving a male-end therein;

said split ring having third camming-surface means, and said wedge means having fourth camming-surface means cooperating with said third camming-surface means, whereby said wedge means may force said split ring toward said spacer means for causing engagement between said first and second camming-surface means after initial travel of said split ring when a male-end is inserted therein.

CLAIM 20(ORIGINAL). The coupler according to claim 19, wherein said wedge-means further comprises fifth camming-surface means, and said outer retaining means comprises sixth camming-surface means for engagement with said fifth camming-surface means, whereby said sixth camming-surface means forces said wedge-means in a first downward vertical direction to cause said first and second camming-surface means to engage after initial travel to cause said spacer means to radial compress in order to allow additional travel of said split ring, whereby said outer retaining means may lock said female end in locking engagement with a male-end.